

Rumor and Gossip

Rumor: a statement that may or may not be true, and is hard to confirm.

Gossip: information that is passed from person to person with a bad effect

Let's get started . . . Do you know any secrets? Are you good at "keeping secrets"? Explain.








Story: Joe is 8 years old. One day he goes to school with a stomach ache. He plays with the other kids at recess and then feels dizzy. He gets a drink of water at the drinking fountain. After drinking the water, he feels more sick and goes to the nurse's office. Another kid named Bob, tells the other kids, "Joe threw up on the water fountain!" "Eeeew!" they all say. The story spreads from one kid to the next until the whole school is hearing that "someone" or "Joe" threw up on the water fountain. Nobody uses the water fountain for two weeks.

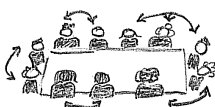


What is going on in this story? Is Bob spreading a rumor, spreading gossip or both? Explain.

Interview 3 people about gossip. Write their names in the far left column, and then check the box if true. Ask for an example or details. Ask them:

"Do you hear gossip _____?"

Name	From coworkers? 	From family? 	From neighbors? 	From kids? 	From TV? 



Discuss the questions in pairs or groups.

Is gossip common in your native country? If yes, what do people gossip about? If no, why not? Who gossips a lot or a little in your native country? Give examples.

Share something you learned with the larger group.

Discussion Questions - talk in pairs or small groups. Change groups from time to time.

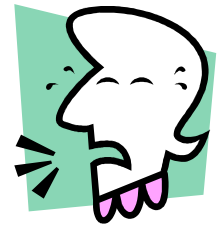
Has this happened to you? Someone says, "I really shouldn't tell you this, but I'm going to anyway." Explain.

How do you define gossip? Can it be positive or negative? Explain.

Socrates used a triple filter test for gossip - 1) "Are you sure it's true? 2) Is it good? 3) Is the information useful to the hearer? If the answers are no, then don't tell it.

What do you think of Socrates' gossip filter?

Have you ever been hurt by gossip or known someone who has been? Give an example.



How do you stop gossip?

Gossip at Work

Bob works at a construction company. Give advice to Bob in each case. Role-play one of these cases.

... Bob hears his coworkers talking, but they don't know that he can hear them. One of them says "I'm getting a promotion." Should Bob congratulate him? Should Bob tell other coworkers?

... Bob's boss tells him that he has to cancel his vacation. Bob is upset because he made plans with his family. Should Bob talk about this with his coworkers?

... Bob works a lot. He can't volunteer at his son's school very often. The other parents talk and complain about him.

Are you sometimes tempted to gossip? When?

Do you like to read or hear about celebrity gossip? Why or why not?

Rumors

What rumors have you heard in the newspaper or on television? Are rumors common in the news? Give examples.

How do rumors spread? How do rumors stop?

Has anyone said to you, "I heard that you _____." Is it true?" How do you feel when that happens?